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March 11, 2000

Federal Caucus Comment Record, c/o BPA-PL
707 W. Main St. Suite 500
Spokane WA 99201

Dear Federal Caucus,

I am a forester who manages land for a privately owned timber company in Northwest Montana. The purpose of my writing is to recommend options on the Four -H Paper. First off I'd like to say it is very discouraging to see that breaching of the lower dams is even an option. It would take at least eight years to get through congress on other litigation until the dams could be breached then it would take many many years of work and cleaning of the rivers till salmonids (trout and salmon) would even benefit from a breach. This thought is unacceptable and has no evidence of even helping. A better option is to improve the existing situation. Currently the dams harness a renewable resource that brings abundant and cheap electrical power for homes and business and has turned arid desert lands into productive crop lands that provide food and jobs for the world, it provides waterways in the Columbia River Basin for bringing products up and down stream, and providing flood control for communities, irrigation for agricultural lands, and providing a myriad of recreational opportunities. I would also like the following comments on each "H" considered.

1. HYDOPOWER:

I believe option 1 to continue present operations and ongoing improvements to the system, with roughly the existing annual level of investment continuing into the future.

The barriers that dams created have been bypassed by fish and are increasing becoming less of a burden on fish. Adult fish are making it upstream to spawn and juvenile fish are successfully making it downstream. There is however some more room for improvement to increase numbers. Some measures such as surface bypass systems for juvenile fish to increase dam passage survival should be considered for



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certain areas. Also the use of improved technology be used such as extended length fish screens, barging and trucking, turbine improvements, improved spill lips and other measures **short of dam breaching and augmentation flows** to help fish migration. It is important to not decrease power production and drive up power costs that many Americans have a hard time funding already.

2. HATCHERIES:

Because of the lack of knowledge of hatchery management and how it affects native solmonids I don't have any comments at this time.

3. HABITAT:

I think that option 1 moderate increases in efforts to protect and restore habitat is the best option. An important issue to note is not to decentralize habitat decisions to local decision-makers and not to effect private land rights. Habitat approaches need to concentrate on decentralizing habitat decisions and let local decision-makers decide on projects. Upland habitat is not effecting fish populations and migration. States currently have in place effective habitat conservation plans for upland management. For example in Montana we have the Streamside Management Zone law and Best Management Practices (BMP) that mandate timber harvesting activities. These laws and practices are effective and allow our forests to work as collectors, filters and distributors of clean water on which plants, animals and humans depend on. Low water flows can strand fish and/or cause water temperatures to increase, thus increasing fish diseases and mortality. Timber harvesting increases water flows to a much more natural flow that mimics pre-European establishment of the West or pre-fire suppression. Therefore timber harvesting is in all reality good for fish when adequate laws and BMP's are followed.

Some improvements in urban runoff from residential and industrial development can be made, but again these decisions can be made on a local level with some guidance and education from federal agencies.

A lot of studies show ocean conditions including currents and temperatures can affect salmonids. During dry and warm periods populations are down. Periods of cool and wet increase populations. More research and publication needs to be done in the area of habitat.

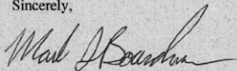
4. HARVEST:

I would recommend option 3 harvest impacts on listed populations would be reduced to conservation crisis levels for ten years after which a shift could be implemented based on populations. I do believe that low fish populations are due to over harvesting of fish and harvest levels shouldn't be increased. Commercial fishing in the lower Columbia River using gillnets should completely stop. The sport fishing out on the

coast isn't as critical of an impact on the overall issue, however limiting numbers of take is definitely an alternative. Native American usage of salmonids needs to reflect the crisis situation that everyone is reacting to. Tribal governments need to be an active participant and be willing to participate in recover even if this means drastically reducing take, especially for sale.

In conclusion I'd like to say thank you for allowing me the opportunity to comment and that overall I recommend minor changes that don't affect private property rights and most of all doesn't include breaching of any dams.

Sincerely,

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Mark Boardman
Forester

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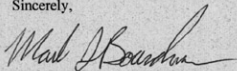
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